

Prasar Bharati concerned over inadequate coverage of rural

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With Broadcast Audience Research Council (BARC) rolling out a new TV viewership measurement system, inadequate coverage of rural India in these studies currently is a cause of concern for Prasar Bharati.

As BARC released its audience measurement study yesterday, the public broadcaster has conveyed to some of the top advertisers that they should keep in mind that a "major shortcoming" is the council's current incapability to cover all of India.

In a letter written to some of the advertisers, Prasar Bharati is learnt to have conveyed that BARC had to stagger installation of its Bar-o-meters and as a result the data rolled out may not reflect viewership in smaller towns and rural areas.

Sources said that Prasar Bharati CEO Jawhar Sircar has conveyed to the advertisers that it would take a couple of months for the new system to bring more areas under its coverage and till then BARC's viewership reports will not present a fully balanced picture.

"Prasar Bharati has written to some of the advertisers conveying that rural areas are being covered, but till the time it is done, the viewership data cannot be considered to be very comprehensive," a senior official said, adding that the situation is likely to improve by July end as more meters would be installed by then.

Officials said that one major factor behind Prasar Bharati's concerns is that the much-awaited DD Kisan channel may be launched soon and it is keen that viewership measurement systems should accurately gauge TV viewing choices of people especially in rural areas.